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# Dear Bill

## MABLE'S LOVE LETTERS TO HER ROOKIE

BY  
FLORENCE ELIZABETH SUMMERS



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ME AN NELLIE

# Dere Bill

*MABLE'S LOVE LETTERS TO  
HER ROOKIE*

BY  
FLORENCE ELIZABETH SUMMERS

WITH 43 ILLUSTRATIONS IN BLACK-AND-WHITE BY  
NATALIE STOKES



SPV

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## TO THE MABLE'S

whom several million Bill's left behind them, waiting—patiently—at home. Knitting. Watching for the postman. Conserving coals on the home fire. Eating meatless meals. Trying to be kind to other Bill's in khaki for *his* sake. Struggling to comprehend things technical, and—understanding a little, as women will, what war really means.



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## *Dere Bill*

*Dere Bill,*

I sure do miss you. Seems like you had been gone two months instead of just two days. You said youd write soon, but I guess youre pretty busy.

You hadnt more than got out of town till here come Nellie struttin up here. Now I aint got nothin against Nellie, Bill, but she sure is hateful an jealous hearted when it comes to you. Shes been flyin round with that Guffy fello just for your and my benefit. She tries to act like shes crazy about him. When she come in she says "I reckon youre lonesome with your fine soldier gone to war." Then she says "Guffy dont have to go to war. Hes workin his brains here for the government, an doin more good than fightin." And I just up and says a little hateful—but composed, "Buddin young citizen, eh?" An she flew off red an mad as whizz an says "I'd ruther have a buddin young citizen at home than a bloomin idiot in the Army." Now she could a lived just as long without sayin that. I like Nellie but she sure

## DERE BILL

does say mean things. I hate a cattish girl. You know thats one thing I can say. I aint cattish or jealous hearted an never was.

You said on your post card you had to send a whole bunch to a lot of other girls. Well, I better close as a bunch of fellos said they was comin about eight an its most seven-thirty, an I got to dress.

As ever  
*Mable*

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NELLIE—Page 1





*Dere Bill,*

Ive just come in from taking a quart of milk over to Grover Sturgion's. He drinks it every day to get fat sos he can get into the Army. Hes underwait. The boys all call him Tuesday. Thats meatless day here. Some of them told him if hed train up a little hed get into the carrier pigeon service. Pa said he was going down the street the other day an saw Judge Perdue coming. He said he got to wondering why he was carrying a walkin cane and when he got close he found he wasnt carryin a walking can at all, he was just walkin along with Grover. Its pitiful how thin he is.

Ive been gettin along pretty good in the dicshunary. Ive learned a lot of good ones under the As. That reminds me I ought to abbreviate this letter sos to alleviate you from being bored. I admonish you Bill, if you dont write soon we wont be affiliating like we always have an you will be abased in my opinion. That would make us adversaries which would make an acute pain in my heart. Thats not a cute Bill, its all one word an means a keen pain. Once Im peeved Im adamantine. That means hard. You get that



"I'VE JUST COME FROM GROVER STURGION'S"—Page 5

## DERE BILL

7

way sleepin in iron beds and eatin rock candy. It gives you a stare that makes a fello feel like his shirt tails out when you look at him. It would be hard for you to adapt to that, gentle as Ive always been with yòu, so I repeat, you better write oftener.

I expect to hear youve been aggrandized soon over the whole aggregated army. Youd soon have the captain aggitated afraid hed lose out if youd just apply yourself.

Yours adherently

*Mable*





"ITS PITIFUL HOW THIN HE IS"—Page 5



*Dere Bill,*

Can you believe it—Nellie's gone an married Guffy, an they moved into the house next to ours. You cant tell me she loves him though. If she wasnt still jealous over you shed make up. Id meet her half way altho I aint goin to speak first. Shes spiteful as ever. She had to ask Maggie Sams to be her maid of honor because we aint speakin, an if she hadnt been awful mad shed a gone on an asked me anyhow cause anybody knows Im better lookin than Maggie. That aint conceit, Bill, I dont like conceit but you know its the truth. Anybody thats looked in the glass much as I have would. I may not be so pretty but—Im darned stylish.

The day after Nellie an Guffy moved in over there Pa had had sum beer sent up and they put it on their poarch by mistaik an she called up an says "Please send and get this barrell. Im afraid somebody will think its mine." That evenin Guffy was settin on their poarch readin and after while he moved over on our side in the shade. I called up Nellie an says "Please come and get this man offen my poarch—Im afraid somebody will think hes mine." I reckon you aint the only one what





"NELLIE'S GONE AN MARRIED GUFFY"—Page 11

DERE BILL

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thinks of things to say, eh Bill? Your good at it though.

I see you spelt a word wrong. I know it was just careless. Don't believe a minute I thought you never knew no better. It aint c-i-e-n-t-i-f-i-c-k. Its s-i-g-h-e-n-t-i-p-h-i-c. You pronounce the p-h like a f an that makes it come out even.

Yours with love

*Mable*

P.S.—I kno it aint for girls to speak of love first but there aint but one chance in ten that you wont get shot and never come back so we might as well be frank.



"ANYBODY THATS LOOKED IN THE GLASS MUCH AS I HAVE  
WOULD"—Page 11

*Dere Bill,*

There aint much new or nothin to write about. Theyve got Guffy in jail for slackin. Nellie most went crazy. I was sorry for her so I went over to see what was goin on. Trouble had softened her considerable an she fell on my shoulder a cryin. My hearts big Bill, so I was kind and tried to comfort her. It seems Guffy never did want to go much. First he had that government job, then he found he wasnt high enough up to be exempted so he got married an claimed he had to support Nellie. That didnt work cause Nellie always has supported herself at the silk mill and they said she could do it again if need be, so Guffy tried to buy a farm, hearin farmers wouldnt have to go. Before he got the deal closed, they drawed his number an he went to be examined at the exemption board. They ought to a took the board to him then an sent him flyin, but he claimed somethin was wrong with his feet. If theyd ever a seen him dance I reckon theyd have believed him. You know how he always drags one foot. Most of the girls couldnt dance with him but I got on to it and whenever hed drag that game foot, Id drag one of mine. I ought to be on to it.



CELL 15



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"THEYVE GOT GUFFY IN JAIL FOR SLACKIN"—Page 15

Member that night we was mad an I got stuck with him? Nellie said the next night after that dance they was out ridin an had a puncture. They didnt have no tire nor pump nor patches nor nothin, an she says Guffy got out and took a look an says "Well, looks like we was stuck as bad as Mable Gimp an me was at the dance last night." But I told Nellie it was nothin like that cause if it had a been she an Guffy would be settin out there in that flivver yet. She told him too, cause he was awful cool for a day or two. Theyve got him in a cooler where hell keep cool now I reckon, till the Boshes begin to make it hot for him.

All the girls are gettin little crossed guns to pin in their shirt waists an some of em are carryin little canes their soldier lover sent em. I hear they dont cost but a dollar an a half. I say thats cheap for the pleasure a girl gets out of things like that.

Yours  
*Mable*



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"SHE FELL ON MY SHOULDER A CRYIN"—Page 15





*My derest Bill,*

I been feelin as royal as bakin powder for the last few days. My Cousin, Jed Bangs was over here in his flivver from Elmore County. Thats why I aint had time to write. We have done nothin but drive from mornin till night and mostly from night till mornin. Jed says its never late till twelve and its always early after that. Jeds just like Uncle Mat, his father and Mas brother. Always Phylosiphying about something or other an hes got all kinds of sence, non and otherwise.

Last night was his last night. We sure did celebrate. Some girl from up on the avenue passed with a fine car all glassed in and her fello settin in a seat all swung round facin hers so Jed always thinkin of somethin nobody else would, went in an got a chair out of the kitchen an put it in with me facin him an we rode like that around an passed the swell couple with the glassed in affair. Its great to have some fello to run around with cause it dont give me much time to think about an miss you. I say a young girl oughtnt to brood over circumstances that cant be helped. If you get killed theres your insurance me and your

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"MY COUSIN, JED BANGS"—Page 21

Mother can divide an that ought to keep me from havin to work for awhile. Gee! Wouldnt a real vacation be great. I can just tell you if I had half of the amount of your insurance, I wouldnt be hangin round here making cornbread. Id eat in the Cafe-fays.

I see youve misspelt another word. Dont let the Army make you careless Bill. Nothin speaks worse for a fello than bum writin. Id correct you but there aint time to look it up. Ive got to cook supper. Dont get jealous about Jed. Remember hes a cousin, though from the way he acted I think he wishes he wasnt. He said Id make the best little wife on the market. Dont get up in the air though. You wouldnt want a wife nobody else would have. Dont worry about the way he always drove with his arm on the back of the seat, cause Im still

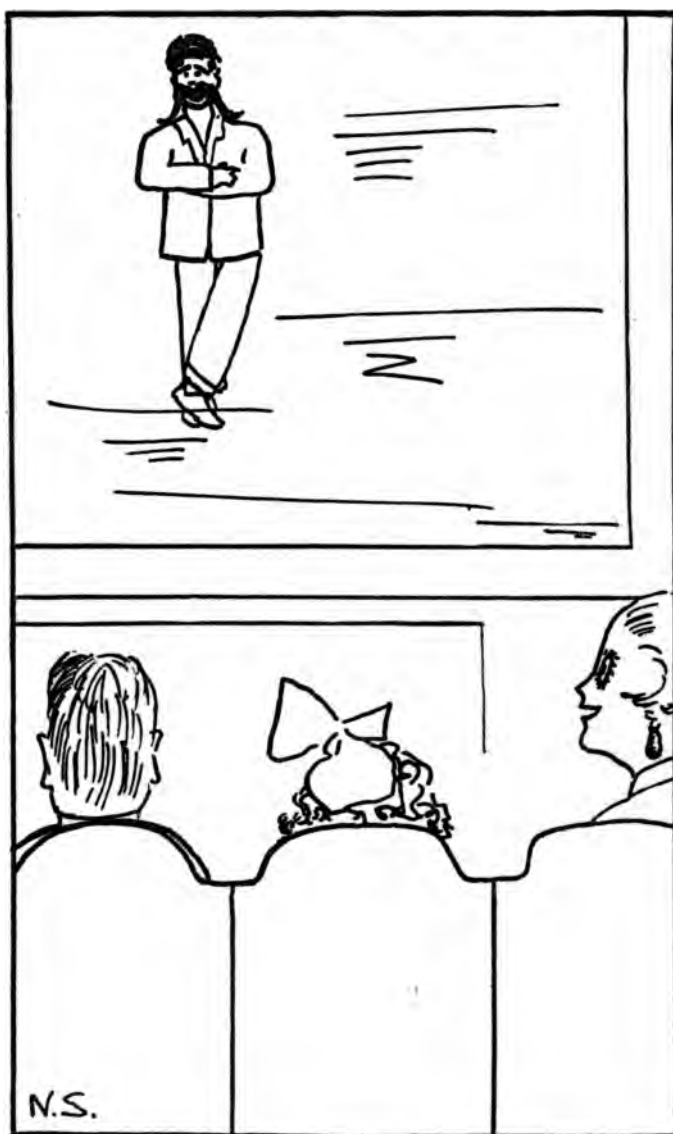
Your same  
*Mable*



*Dere Bill,*

Its rainin cats an I cant get out to go down town so Im goin to write you a long letter. I dont know what it can be about though. The town sure ought to have crepe hung out on it. Its dead an beginnin to rot. They say a strange fello was in town ridin around and passed the Kemical plant and said "Peew! The town is dead, no joke." I dont see why a stranger wouldnt wonder what was wrong. The oders awful! Just like a field of rotten cabbage. They claim its a good thing for the town because it kills germs. I reckon it does if theyre at all delicate. It would kill anything. I bet if they could catch some of it in a bottle an turn it loose over there where the Kaiser is the war wouldnt last long.

That season ticket you bought me to the Happy-hour is punched out. I wish it had lasted two more punches cause that would a finished Pearl White in "The House of Hate." I bet that whiskered man is the hooded Terror cause he looks German. Its a cereul picture, comes every Saturday an the hooded Terror kills people an you dont know who he is. Every Saturday night they most get him an make you think hes goin to take the



"I BET THAT WHISKERED MAN IS THE HOODED TERROR"—Page 27

hood off then the picture quits an they keep you fooled a whole week while theyre thinkin up some way to make you keep comin on every Saturday. Everybody knows for sure the whiskered mans it but they cant be certain till they know there aint no doubt. If whiskers is the German style when you Sammies get to mopin up over there I guess theyll be the style in hell too. Im bettin on you Sammies, Bill.

They say if clothes keep on costin more all the girls will have to go to wearin shredded wheat costumes likes in the pictures in the adds. That would be immodest enough but what would we all do on wheatless days? I dont mean that to sound fresh. Remarks like that made to sound fresh dont become a young girl—but honest you fellos dont know what a problem dressin is gettin to be.

You ought to see the new fello in Pa's office. Looks like he was raised on postum. Hes had a course in business trainin. It dont seem to have taught him much except how to go around lookin like he was expectin a letter. Hes around the house on business a good deal and tries to shine up to me but dont worry or think Id fall for him just because he wears better clothes than you. I like a man what knows how to win a girl without always sayin sweet things to her. He told me the other day not to go out in the rain or Id melt



UN



"THE NEW FELLO IN PA'S OFFICE"—Page 29

DERE BILL

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—sugar always did. Thats the way he is, gifted  
in sayin sweet things but I dont trust fellos like  
that. They say the same things to all girls.

You for mine

*Mable*



N.  
S.



"HES AROUND THE HOUSE ON BUSINESS A GOOD DEAL"—Page 29



*Dere Old Billy,*

I have just arose from my seesta. It aint nothin you see, Bill. Its a sleep you take in the afternoon.

Ive gone to practising my voice three hours a day instead of two. The new man in Pa's office came down last night an says "Miss Mable, I heard you singin all the way down the street an the further off I was the better it sounded." That was a compliment too, cause if my voice carries like that—theres prospects for grand opera.

That new picture of you sure is great. I didnt even recognize it for a long time. I showd it to my music teacher and he said "Why, really, you wouldnt know him. Its a very nice lookin picture." You ought to feel proud that you could get a picture to look like that—that nobody even dreams is you till theyre told because that means its a good picture.

There! I went an told it! My music teacher is a *he*. Dont get jealous though Bill. If you could see him! Hes got hair like a girls and false teeth that fall out when he gets mad an I sing on the wrong key. They fall out every two seconds seems to me like. Quick as whizz though he cliks

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"I'VE GONE TO PRACTISING MY VOICE THREE HOURS A DAY"—Page 35

em back in. Once he was showin me how to sing a note an the top ones fell out an most choked him. . . . I had to laff. That made him so mad he just put em on top of the piano an went on singin like he had hot mush in his mouth. Little Sue got a whippin because she was hidin under the sophia watchin him an got so scared she rolled out.

Hes a good teacher tho. He used to brag about bein a German musician an get paid big for lessons, but hes sorter quit that now an you can pay him what you want to.

The new fello in Pa's office is mad at me sorter. He said he wished he could go to war because they needed more hard boiled eggs. I told him that he better stay here cause they had enough of the kind that wouldnt cook. You know what kind wont cook, dont you Bill? Thats the kind of an egg he is. Hes fresh too, in a way. The other day he went to help me on the street car an my dress was tight an the step was high. He says "Miss Mable, the more I see of you, the better I like you." I pretended not to catch on cause you could take it too ways. Low down Bill, thats him all over, as you sometimes say. His brain runs like a sewer pipe. I like Genteel conversation with my boy friends.

From one who is all for you

*Mable*







"HES GOT HAIR LIKE A GIRLS AN FALSE TEETH"—Page 35



*Dere Bill,*

Your letter made me effervescent with joy to know you had been made a corporal. Thats next to captain, aint it? Youll be a Admiral yet Bill. Dont never think it dont pay to work for per-motion. The Word says, "Virtue shall have re-ward", an dont never get blue an think it wont. How does it feel to have all the rookies salutin?

I got that word up there out of Grandmas dic-shunary an it means to bubble up or over. If you should want to look it up it comes under the E's. I dont reckon youd have to though. Its sure expressive. I was that glad to know you was an officer I knew if I wasnt effervescent (or bubblin over) Id bust.

So your learnin French talk? Nellie was in to-day an I says you was talkin it like a native. She says, "Native of where? Calamazoo?" Im doin a little studyin myself. I thought Id study up on some of these long english words of four sillables. Its been so long since I was in school—not that I consider myself old Bill because Im not but five years older than you, an you was in the draft age or Nellie says you wouldnt be where you are now but dont worry, I kno better. Im studyin sos



"I C"

RD OUT OF GRANDMAS DICSHUNARY"—Page 41

Ill understand the tecknickle part of your letters better as you rise in the Army.

Ma dropped the iron board on her foot yesterday so I got extra work.

By-By  
*Mable*



UN.



"MA DROPPED THE IRON BOARD ON HER FOOT"—Page 43





*Dere Bill,*

Father has had a liver attack and ma's foots still swelled—so Im too busy to write long.

Im sorry your feet are givin you so much trouble. Your mother was in yesterday and we studied what we could do. Rite after she left I picked up a paper and saw a add. It said "Have you a lover in the Army? Send him sum of our footease an keep him comfortable." So I showd it to your mother an were goin together an send you sum.

Nellie an me aint speakin. I like Nellie, Bill, but shes so hateful over you. I was explainin, to her yesterday about that Camoouflage an how you soldiers use it to make folks think youre what you aint. She says "I reckon thats what Bill uses to make em think hes a soldier." Im tired hearin her mirate. Everybody knows shed a had you if she could a got you away from me, but I know a good thing when I see it—eh, Bill? An I was rite on my job.

Aunt Mira was in from the country last nite, to spend the nite. Shes always gettin somethin wrong an takin us by surprise. This time it was a church bug had died in one of the notes in her



"YOUR MOTHER WAS IN YESTERDAY"—Page 47

accordian, an she couldnt play "The Happy Land", an had to have it fixed. She says Jeds a Lieut. I guess he gets his bravery from Uncle Mat—ma's brother, an his father. When Uncle Mat was young it used to be said he was so brave hed tackle hell with one bucket of water.

Here I set tellin you sweet things an the corn bread for fathers diet burnin in the stove. I dont see no need for him a diet. He eats it first, then he eats the rest of the dinner. If ma dont shut up they will be another movin picture on "Why young girls leave home."

Your girl  
*Mable*





"I PICKED UP A PAPER AN SAW A ADD"—Page 47

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*Bill dere,*

I been to Red Cross Working today. Speakin of something tecknickle! Theyre awful down there. When I got there they said please to wash my hands before I fooled with the bandages. They called it sergical dressings but I hoped the doctors would put on more than that when they operated, but they dont dress themselves in them, they put em on the fello that the Hun has cut up. I knowd my hands was clean cause it being Monday Id been washin all morning but I washed em an didnt argue or explain. Then they told me to go over in the corner an stretch. I went over an started stretchin my arms an they all commenced to laff. I didnt know what at. I thought the stretchin was a good idea cause you had to set still so long foldin the rags. But it wasnt myself that I was supposed to stretch, it was the cloth to make the things to dress you fellos in when the Germans leave you on the battle field bleedin to death. Why didnt they tell me to stretch the cloth? How is anybody goin to tell? Thats the way it went with everything—nothin made plain. They say the Red Cross is a sign of mercy. They showed me mighty little. Didnt





"ID BEEN WASHIN ALL MORNING"—Page 53

explain nothin—then laffed when Id done somethin wrong. All the women talk about is babies an Hoover cornbread. Mrs. Joe Backner was braggin about how hers never cried. If I hadnt been no more human than she was Id have told her it was because she never stayed at home to hear it. They live too doors from us. The kid will never have to go West for consumpshun as long as it keeps up its lung practice.

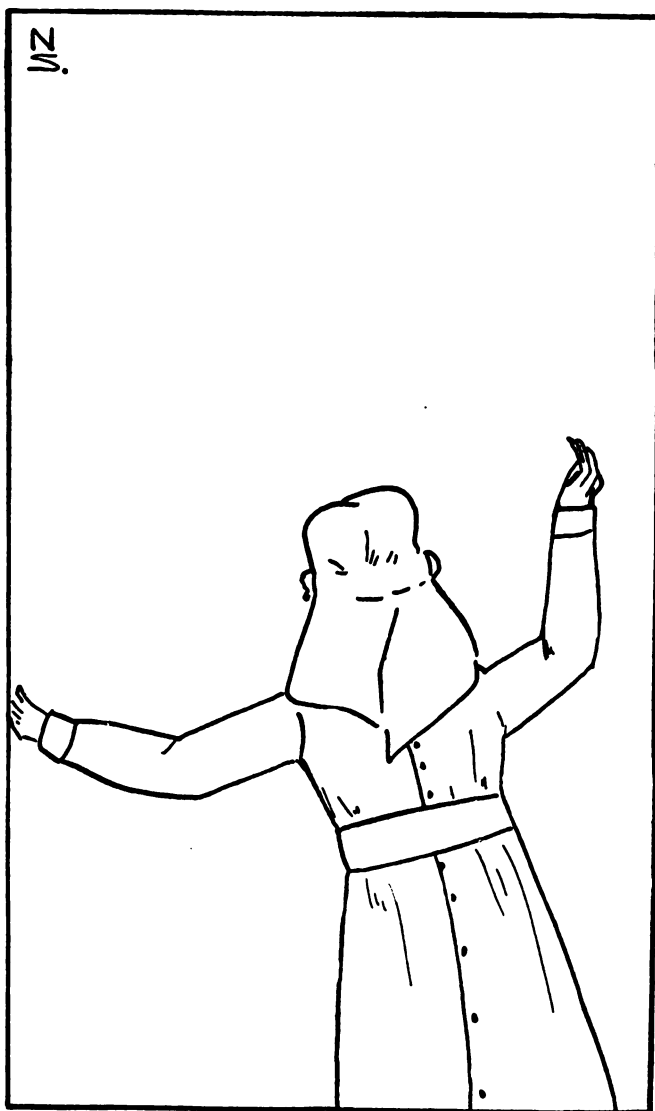
I went in the parlor last night an played "A Maidens Prayer." It made me awful blue. That was always your favorite song.

Thanks for the swagger stick. Hope you didnt take my runnin on for a hint. Maggie Sams got one of those cross gun pins today an Im knittin on some sox for you.

Yours till Niagara falls

*Mable*





**"THEY TOLD ME TO GO OVER AN STRETCH"—Page 53**



*Dere Bill,*

I know its been a week since I wrote but Ive been knittin me a rainbow sweater. All the girls up on the avenue are makin em an their awful loud. Theres are. Mines made out of the scraps from your things tho with just a little touch of red and yellow your mother gave me. Most of em look like that coat you read about that Moses had on Joseph in the bull rushes. I made mine in three days but its too hot to wear it. The avenue girls wear theres just the same. Their pride keeps them cool I reckon, but you know me Bill, I aint proud. I never would a promised to marry you if I had a been, but I never care what people say long as I know a good thing when I see it. An not many fellos have your looks or money either, or are as close about keepin it. Thats a unusual trait I love in you Bill. Your perservative.

Im doin all the cookin. Aunt Mira died and ma went to the funeral. Looks like ma gets to go everywhere. They dont know what was the matter with her, just took a dose of Dr. Lufords medicine an died. Dr. Lufords the best doctor



"I'VE BEEN KNITTIN ME A RAINBOW SWEATER"—Page 59

in town now. If you ever get sick Ill send for him. Kill or cure—thats his motto.

Cookins hard now cause pa's diet calls for soup an they wont let us have it now cause Nellie's sick next door an they want everything kept quiet. Pa eats soup awful loud. At dinner I was that wore out I set down on the woodbox an cried. A tack didnt give me much time to meditate though. Blessed is he that set on a tack, I reckon, for he shall rise again.

Maggie Sams thinks shes so smart just because she took a year of High School. She was askin me the other day why I didnt learn to pronounce the Kaiser's name an I told her it would take anybody with a powerful bad cold to sneeze them names out. an besides when *You* got over there his name would be mud an anybody could pronounce that. Thats right too, eh Bill?

Must close on this line.

As ever  
*Mable*







"IM DOIN ALL THE COOKIN"—Page 59



*Dere Bill,*

You ought to see what Pa's office boy brought up to-night. Honestly hes the cutest thing. Roy says hes the best friend hes got in the world an Ive got to be good to him. I thought we could keep him right here at the house but Pa says he would eat too much, so Roy says hell bring him up every night. Hes going to stay with some other friends Roy has in town. His names Broggins. Don't you think that is a cute name? You would if youd see him cause it just suits him. Its going to be nice to have him around a good deal for then Ill have something else to think about an wont miss you so much. Last night he sat in my lap an stuck his tongue out at your picture. I didnt have the heart to slap him he looked so cute. Hes crazy about the victrola. I have to play it to him all the time to keep him quiet.

Dont get jealous because Im not the least bit crazy about Roy. The only reason he comes around so much is that he has business with Pa an he lets me have Broggins while he talks to him. You know me Bill, Hospitable, thats me all over. You ought to know Bill for whether you come when in the shades of evenin or with



"HE STUCK HIS TONGUE OUT AT YOUR PICTURE"—Page 65

the lights of mornin it was always the same welcome you got. An Broggins is such a dear. Here he comes with Roy now. When he first gets in the house he always jumps around like hes so glad to see me.

I went through the insane asylum yesterday. There sure are some nuts there too. One old woman thinks shes Queen Victoria. Another one thinks shes an umbrella and never goes out except when it rains. The rest of the time she stands behind the door. Another one was runnin around sorter wild an I asked her who she was. She said she was a poached egg huntin a piece of toast to sit on. Oh there awful.

Guffys out of jail an some how he got out of his charges. The judge didnt know him like I do I reckon.

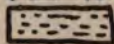
Write soon. Goodby for this time.

*Mable*



N.W.

# INSANE ASYLUM



"I WENT THROUGH THE INSANE ASYLUM"—Page 67



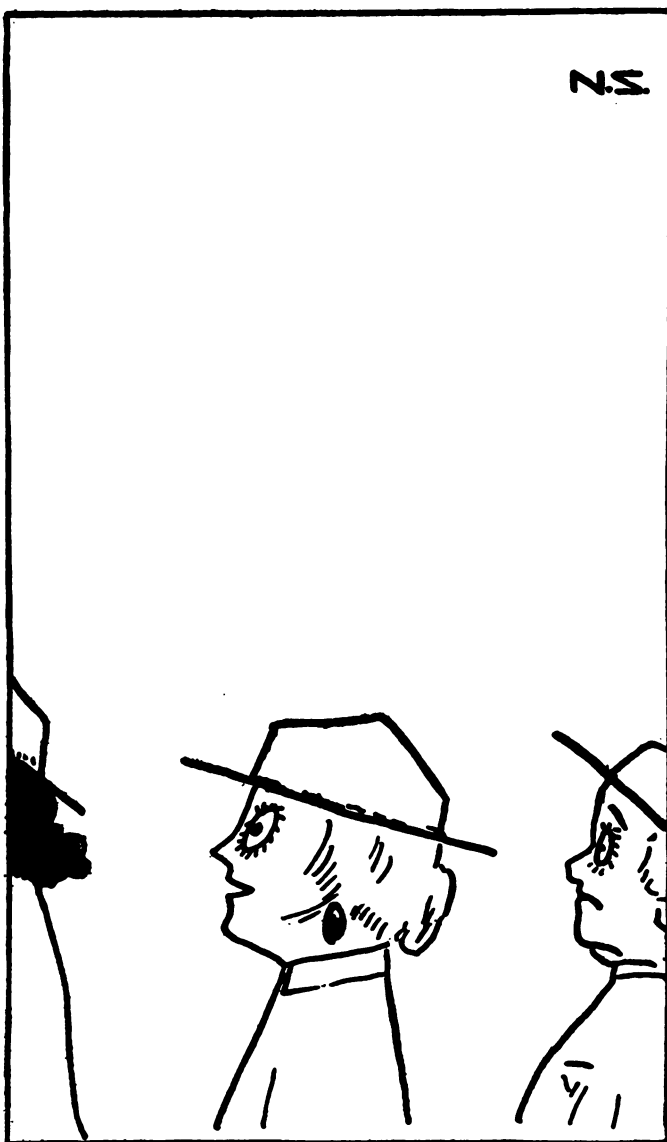


*Dere Bill,*

I been havin a little practise in military drill myself down at the Y. W. C. A. No wonder you get balled up. If theyd leave off some of the fancy switchin thats to show off your uniform, I guess, an go right after the Germans theyd save a lot of time an win the war quicker. I dont see no real fightin to it Bill.

First they lines us up an told us to count off, It was a good lookin officer trainin us an thats the reason all the girls went except me. You know me Bill. Im signed up for the season an when I see a better lookin man than you I dont run after him. Im as true as blue Bill. I just went to see what it was like. Nellie was there scrambling around like an egg trying to get on the front row. She knocked me right out of line. It was disgustin. She always did run after the boys. You ought to know, Bill.

Where was I? Oh yes, they told us to "Count off" and nobody did anything, not knowing what to do. Then he explained that there was two commands, a preparation command and an execution command. Then he says "Right dress" an nobody did nothin again so he started ex-



72

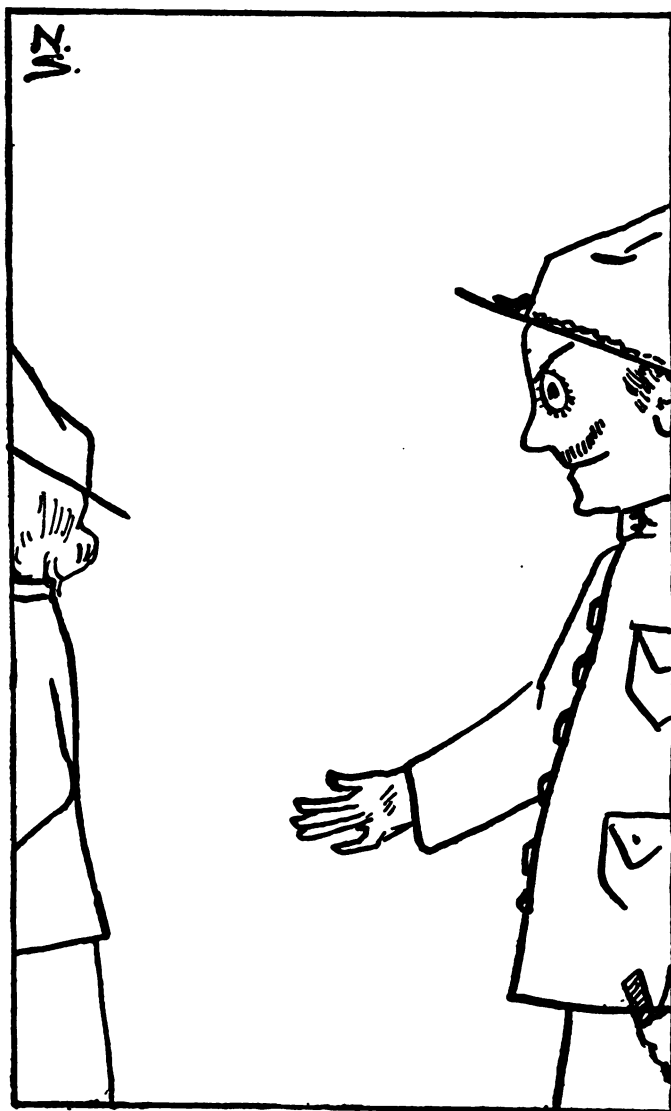
"I BEEN HAVIN PRACTISE IN MILITARY DRILL"—Page 71

plainin. He said that on the preparation command "Right" you turned your eyes an head to the right an I noticed he always managed to be up along to the right somewhere. Nellie was on the end an I bet it nearly killed her when he told her the end man kept his eyes straight to the front. She started pushing me an asking me to swop places with her an I would have if she hadnt been so anxious. Then the officer said the command of execushion was "Dress" and to take up your dress and hold it. I thought that was too fresh so I left. He could say that to men but military drill wasnt maped out for ladies. I leave my part to you Bill.

When the war ends

*Mable*





"I THOUGHT THAT WAS TOO FRESH"—Page 73

he hadnt had the liberty measles for a week. Now bein in the army I dont care if you write to some other girls trustin you as I do. Some girls wouldnt stand for it Bill, but Im broadminded. All I ask is let them send their own stamps. Its only right.

We passed Nellie and Guffys house last night comin from the Church an Pa said Guffy must have joined the home guard cause they had a window up an its the first time for some time theyve been so afraid hed get caught in the draft. Pa's got a head like a tack Bill. Pity he didnt have more schooling.

This mornin Roy an I made up a song an went out on the front poarch an sang it accidentally on purpose so they could hear it. It was,

“Rather be a dog in a niggers back yard  
Than to be a member of the Home Guard.”

To the tune of the “Blues”. Now they aint speakin which is common.

With love  
*Mable*







*Dere Bill,*

I thought maybe when Nellie got married shed quit bein spiteful about you but she seems to be still jealous of me an cant help but show it. Weve made up cause she says she knows Roy made up the song. She neednt think I couldnt have done it if Id thought of it first, but I didnt tell her so. She was over this morning an I was readin her parts of your letter by way of lettin her keep up with the times an things of interest an importance. I read about the inspecshun on Saturdays. She says she bet the tooth inspector had to put on smoked glasses to keep your gold teeth from puttin his eyes out. Then she says "What did Bill have them gold teeth put in for anyhow? Because the lights on his Ford are so dim he thinks the reflecshun will help him keep in the road at night." She makes me sick. Everybody knows she adores your gold teeth an used to tell you they were ristocratic, which they are.

Your poetry was alamageorgeous Bill an Ma plum caflabagated in a chair when she heard it an said it was awful, meanin the pictures it presented to her mind. Its nice to have a fello who shows some new talent every day or two that you



"I WAS READIN HER PARTS OF YOUR LETTER"—Page 81

hadnt even suspected before. I was surprised enough when I found you had the makins of a officer an was a corperal, but a poetical officer is great.

Im writin some to you that Ill send next time. I tried to get it finished but Im not so smart as you I guess. Itll give you somethin to look forward to.

Yours till you get it  
*Mable*



*Dere Bill,*

Heres my poetry. Its not as good as yours  
but it rhymes enough for you to get the main  
idea.

## MY HERO

### I

When I think about the guns,  
Smashin up the german Huns,  
It makes the shivers creep  
But my heart begins to leap.

### II

I hear the drums wild beat,  
To the tread of marchin feet,  
And I figure through it all  
Who answered Uncle Sammys call.

### III

He is now engaged in strife  
That may mean his mortal life,  
On his baynut are two Boshes  
Uttering dreadful cries an Goshes.



"MY POETRY IS NOT AS GOOD AS YOURS"—Page 85

IV

Theres an awful din an prattle,  
Through the ragin of the battle,  
Though theres mud an rain an slop  
He leads the boys over the top.

V

Into no mans land they go  
And as they face the awful foe  
Hes the one that has the punch  
An the bravest of the bunch.

VI

An now Bill when you come home  
Dont be swelled around the dome  
Or in love with some French girl  
Because she has a little curl.

VII

But remember that Im waitin  
An also anticipatin  
That for me therell be concern  
On the day when you return.



22



"ROY GAVE ME SOME PERFUME"—Page 89

I hope youll like it, Bill. Dont show it to the other fellos for their girls might not be poetical and it would make them feel bad because they couldnt get some too. Thats all in fun of course, Bill.

Roy gave me some perfume the other day, but Im still gettin stronger and stronger for you.

*Mable*



"ROY GOT US TICKETS"—Page 91

*Dere Bill,*

I may not get to write often next week for a Chantauque is comin to town an Roy got us tickets. He got them give to him complimentary for sellin them to the leadin Business men. A Chantauque aint a kind of automobile, Bill, though one of the big bugs Roy went to sell tickets to seemed to think so. Roy asked him if he was goin to support the Chantauque an he said hed done bought a Cadalack. I dont know exactly what it is myself, but it must be some kind of show if you have to have tickets for it. I know it aint an automobile anyhow. Wasnt that rich?

Ive got a new dress. Its pretty nifty but I guess you aint interested in womans clothes. Too busy dopin out that plan to stop the war, eh Bill? Hows it comin? I guess if you really did get it down wed have more green blinds in that house than weve planned for. I wouldnt marry a man for money, Bill. Im not mercenary or worldly, but it makes it mighty nice for a girl when a fello shes picked out happens to have some.

I sent my pome to the home newspaper. They sent it back. Couldnt appreciate it. They said the dedication wasnt appropriate. It was dedi-



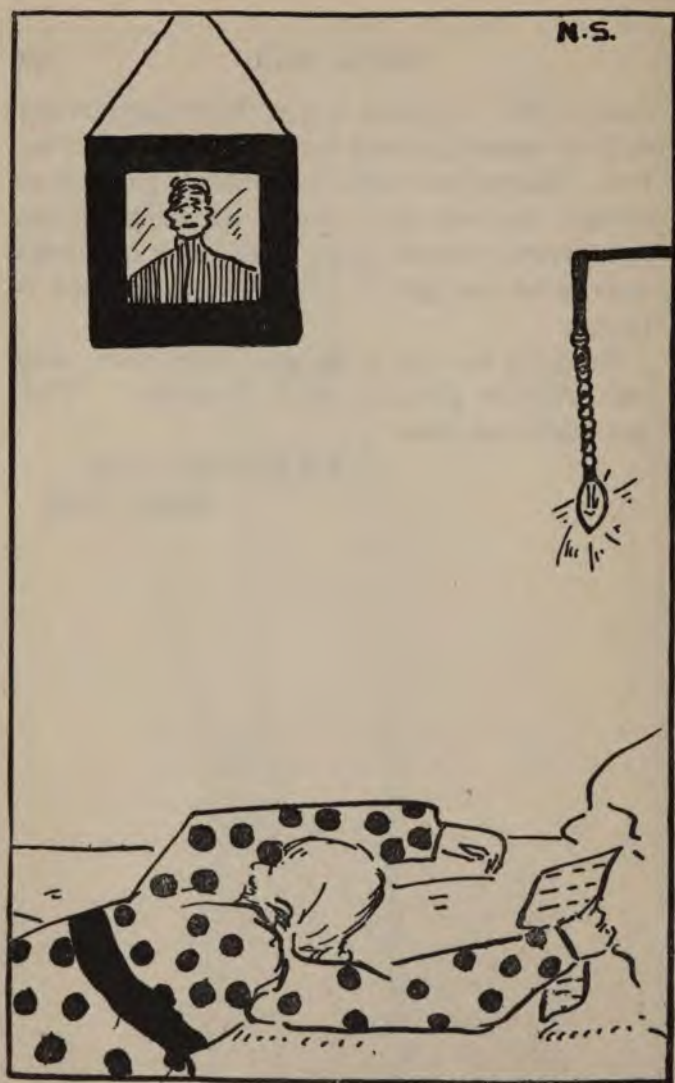
"I'VE GOT A NEW DRESS, ITS PRETTY NIFTY"—Page 91

cated to you. I reckon maybe the dedicashun has to be to somebody dead but I didnt know that before. Maybe you would be before it got printed though, the way they usually do things in the newspapers around here. The news is always stale when we get it. Maybe you noticed it though.

Broggins has got so he goes everywhere with me. All the girls are wild about him. Wish you could see him.

Till you come home

*Mable Gimp*



N.S.

"WHEN I GOT YOUR LETTER I BROKE DOWN AN CRIED"—Page 95

*Dere Bill,*

When I got your letter I broke down an cried. I know you dont like demonstrashuns of grief. Knowin that I dont think I would have lost control of myself except that I was in the kitchin helpin Ma peel onions an they had my emotions up already when the postman came with your letter.

The idea of you not knowin Broggins was a dog! There hasnt another man looked at me since you left an I wouldnt a paid no attenshun to them if they had, knowin how twould make you feel. And to think this had to happen over a dog when Ive been so careful about other fellos. Looks like even if I forgot to mention Broggins was a dog youd have faith enough in me to know it was some kind of animal.

I know you didnt hear from no other girls about it cause I remember tellin you those things myself thinkin you would know it was a dog. I never knew you to lie to me before Bill, but





"BROGGINS, HE WENT MAD AN DIED"—Page 98

I wont hold it against you as I know you must a been desperate thinkin some fello was comin up every nite an stickin his tongue out at your picture. I guess you most went crazy. Too bad, you didnt ask me before so you could have been gettin more sleep nights. It must have been awful to work hard all day an then be too bothered to sleep at nights. Its no use sayin how sorry I am Bill, words couldnt express it, an you away from home for the first time too.

Im sendin back your things an a choclat cake. I didnt tell Ma an Pa. Theyve had their hopes up so high since you been stickin around so much that after all I was goin to get off, that I knew it would be such a disappointment Pa would get a attack an Ma hasnt been well anyhow, an Pa has been nervous all along for fear somethin would happen to knock it in the head. Say, what would Nellie done if wed busted up? Shes been tryin long enough.

Now Bill, be careful hereafter what kind of notions you get in your head. It sure would be low down for you to go back on me an I hope you realize Im bindin you to your promise. It aint like I had another chance I might a had once, but I gave up Jim Baily for you an if youre any ways a gentleman youll make it worth while.

I know youre a gentleman though Bill an Im

not layin this on you. It was my fault but here-  
after you can know Im

Yours till the sun sets forever

*Mable*

P.S.—Dont worry about Broggins nohow. I  
forgot to say he went mad yesterday an died of  
Hydrefobia. Every dog has his day.

*Mable*

N.S.



"I WENT AN GOT SOME SWELL GOODS"—Page 101



*Dere Bill,*

Your all the time writin me askin me what I think you done now? Well, Im writin you askin you what you think I done now? The way I happened to think of it was this. Since so many of the fellos joined the home guard an got uniforms, the girls have got so flirty I cant afford to go with them like I used to. Why, Maggie Sams has most got to be the kind that frizzes her hair out on the side like baked potatoes an looks in the barber shop an reads Bevo signs. So of course I had to quit goin with her an the rest is just as bad. The way Nellie does for a married woman is scandalous. So not bein able to go with them any more I get more time to think of things concernin you an me after the war. So what you think I done now? Ive started a war chest! I aint goin to call it a hope chest cause Nellie would be sure to say I ought to call it a hopeless chest, never missin the chance to say something hateful. I reckon if youve got seven dollars (\$7) saved up toward them green shutters for our white house, I orter begin to think about some curtains to go behind them, so I went down town the other day an got some swell goods



"YOUR MOTHERS WEARIN A FLUE MASK"—Page 103

to make them out of, payin twenty-five cents (25c) a yard for it. Its got yellow cupids on it, holdin lavender flowers in there hands. Theres purple ribbon tied to their wings thats flyin an flutterin while theyre scatterin the flowers. They ought to brighten the dining room up some. Ive took flower sacks an hemmed us enough dish rags to last till old man Gabriel blows the last time. Im tryin to work the practical in with the ornamental. Maybe Ill get along faster on it next week, as pa's got a liver attack an ma's got the flue.

I reckon youve heard about the epidemick. Somebody sneezes without their handkerchief up an it spreads. Thats what Dr. Luford says. He says the only good thing about it is that when a patient dies theres plenty more gettin sick. The doctors is the only ones that dont have to worry. Your mothers been wearin a flue mask sos she wont get it, an it improves her looks mightily.

I got a date tonight—reckon I dont have to tell you its with Roy. Were goin to prayer meetin. He always asks me for a date prayer meetin night, cause he knows pa says I got to go an it wont cost him nothin. I sure do miss you, Bill. I aint seen the inside of a picture show since my ticket to the Happyhour punched out. The man that preaches tonight has got a B. V. D. or somethin tacked on to the hind part of his name. I guess



he didnt study out of one of them little Bibles like your mother give you to carry in your pocket when you went to war. I bet he knows the big one plum through.

I got them white carnations you sent me for Thanksgivin, but there must a been some mistake. The card says "Rest in Peace." I guess the florist got things mixed with the epidemick.

Hoping you are the same,

*Mable*

P.S.—Ma says keep your feet dry. Anybody can get it.

N.S.



"WE DANCED THE CHIMMY"—Page 107



*Dere Bill,*

Maggie had a party for the home guard last night. I thought at first I wouldnt go, the way they had been actin so foolish an freakish, but knowin theys so few attractive girls around here now I thought Id go an help her out. We danced a new dance they call the chimmy. The fello that invented it must a had shell shock or some-thin. You never would learn to do it. Its too complicated. Remember what a hard time you had learnin to dance plain? There was one fello there danced awful. He pumped with his arm like he was tryin to get his engine started. Finally when Id been stuck with him two or three dances I says, "Well now were cranked up—lets dance awhile." They was one Colonel there. He started rushin me heavy at first but I saw that little gold chicken on his shoulder an thought he was a cook. He rushed Nellie but I could a had him if Id known what he was. Who wants a Colonel with a fello like you, Bill? Not me.

Us girls has decided we dont know much about the service, so weve got a little bunch that meets together every other night. We call it "Gettin in touch with the service." We have gay old times



"THEY WAS ONE COLONEL THERE"—Page 107

an I mean we have fun livin up to the name. I learned at it tonight that the thing on the Colonels shoulder aint a chicken—its a eagle. It sure looked like a chicken to me.

I got a new hat. Its good lookin, too. Nellie sure has got brass. I brought it home an called her over to see it, an after she looked at it awhile she said "Its awful cute. I believe I can copy it for a every day knock about hat." Knock about hat nothin! She never had a Sunday hat as good lookin as that hat is.

Its been awful cold lately. The rain barrels froze. If you an me ever get rich after the war I aint never goin to see another bit of frost except on post cards. They say Santa aint comin down chimneys this year. Scared hell catch the flue.

Yours till we winter in Florida

*Mable*

\_\_\_\_\_



"COUSIN LULAS CRAZY ABOUT THE VICTROLA"—Page 114



\_\_\_\_\_

*Dere Bill,*

I been thinking of you lately, an how you love to eat. We got a new kind of greens. Somebody sent them to pa from the mountains down south. Theyre galax. The leaves is larger than spinich. Were tryin some for dinner, cooked with good old country bacon. Im sittin in the kitchen writin an watchin them so they wont scortch.

Our meetin, "Gettin in touch with the service" gets more interestin an more fun every time. I thought it would be borin at first but it aint. Ive worked on my war chest all day. Ive embroidered some pillo shams with "Good night" an "Good Morning", like your mothers. Shes goin to give us her framed motto "God bless our home". Looks like well have the furniture long before we get the house.

Cousin Lula has been in from the country with little Mable, named after me. They say shes three years old, but she must be older than that, for she couldnt have gotten as dirty as she is in three years. I never saw such a young un. Shes somethin like her pa. Went to Washington to the inauguration once an took a clean shirt an

a five dollar bill. Stayed three weeks an never changed either one of them.

Cousin Lulas crazy about the victrola. She never heard one before. The other day we was all on the front poarch fer a little while an pa started it up an cousin Lula propped the screen door open sos she could hear better.

I must go and get busy "Gettin in touch with the service."

Yours till I know more about it

*Mable*



"I STOPPED AN SNIFFED THE AIR"—Page 119

\_\_\_\_\_

*Dere Bill,*

Howll we ever get along when were married, with you always takin things the wrong way an never understandin anything? "Keepin in touch with the service" is a book we read at Maggie Sams house, on military instrúshuns an for you to think we was having the home guard fellos up an showin them a good time an callin it gettin in touch with the service, was an insult. I may have let you hold my hand in the canal at Wee Willow Park on a Saturday night but after the way I slapped you on the face the night you tried to put your arm around me in the hammock that Sunday night, I thought you knew I was no cooin dove. You ought to know if I was goin to let anybody it would be you. I aint even said anything cute to any of the home guard but once an that was to the Colonel at Maggie Sams party. He didnt have sense enough to appreciate it. Wed been stuck about two hours an after while by way of makin conversashun he got inquisitive an says, "Miss Mable, whos the man of the hour?" An I says, "You seem to be at present." He never even took the hint. Thats the way I do, Bill, always handin em lemons. There oughtnt



"'INDEPENDENT!'" I SAY, "'ME TOO, BILL!'"—Page 110

to be nothin between us now to keep us from bein like other engaged people. I guess youve always worried a little about Roy. You neednt no more. Hes too cheap a skate for me to notice. The other night we passed the candy kitchen an the candy was cookin and smelled awful good. I stopped an sniffed the air an says, "Dont that candy smell good!" An he says, "Yes, lets stop an smell it awhile." I wasnt goin with him for what I could get out of him, but I thought it was time to quit.

Now, Bill, theres no sense in your takin everything wrong. I thought when Broggins died all trouble was over among us, an I been careful to explain everything since but you had to go an get somethin else in your head wrong. I aint sayin it aint my fault for not explainin better but hereafter you can ask to have it made plain before you accuse me of anything. You once says, "Independent! Thats me all over, Mable." Well, I say, "Me too, Bill!" An mean it. I dont mean to bust up, but use your common sense an you wont find the welcom wore off the door mat when you come home.

I aint no saw dust doll but just your

*Mable*



# WESTERN UNION

RECEIVED NO.

TIME

CHECK



## NIGHT LETTER

THEO. H. VAIL, PRESIDENT

Private Bill Smith,  
U. S. Army

Dere Bill,

I aint heard from you for some-time, perhaps they got a sensor now at your camp. Please try to get a sensor that you know. You ought to have seen a letter what Maggie Sams got from her best fellow Charlie Foote. The sensor must have been a German or an old button hole maker. I dont know which was the worst cut up, Maggie or the letter. You know what lovely things Charlie says. Perhaps he dont say em to men, though. After one sentence the sensor wrote Mush. The only reason he didnt out the sentence out was sos he could be funny. So please get a sensor you know and tell him there aint nothin in any of your letters worth readin anyhow. Pa has had a long streak of liver or I know hed send his best. There isnt enough of it now to make it worth sending. Tommy Jones drew a beard an a mustash on your fotograph. You got no idea how it changes you. Always remember I love you no matter what you look like.

Mable





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Dere Bill :

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